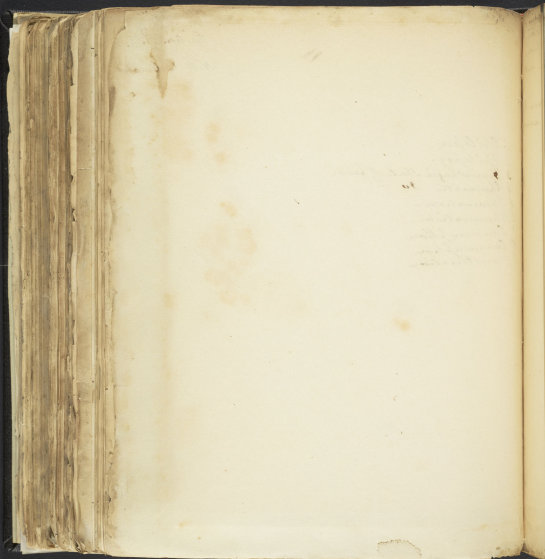


Epilepsy.

H. N. Coleman

Coleman -
Epilepsy.

1. Epilepsy -
2. Epilepsy -
3. Hemorrhagic State of fever
4. Rheumatism &c.
5. Rheumatism -
6. Rheumatism -
7. Consumption
8. Consumption
9. menstruation



Of the parish of St. Andrew, and

Medical faculty of the

University of Pennsylvania

for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine
in the
City of Philadelphia

By Thomas A. Wilson of

Virginia

This Essay forms a pretty good volume of the
question - although there is nothing novel to recom-
mend it; yet the author appears to have paid con-
siderable attention in drawing his information from
a great variety of sources; and is consequently enti-
tled to the merit of attention & research -

I would ask him what he particularly means by
his term of congeniality, which he enumerates among
the remote causes of this disease. -

An Inaugural Dissertation on Epilepsy

Submitted to the Examination

Of the provost, Trustees, and

Medical Faculty of the

University of Pennsylvania

for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine
on the day of April

Eighteen Hundred and Eleven

By James A. Coleman of

Virginia

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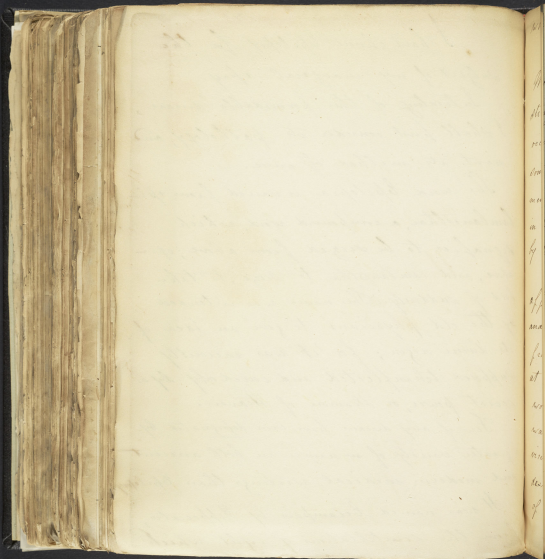
I have chosen Epilepsy for the
subject of my inaugural essay.

In treating of this formidable disease,
I shall first consider its pathology, and
next its method of cure.

The word Epilepsia is varied from epi-
lambanesthai, a compound word, which
signifies to be seized from above; epi-
above, and lambanesthai to seize, to take
hold of suddenly. This name was intended
by the old physicians to give an idea of
its divine origin; for it was anciently
supposed to be inflicted and cured only by a
secret power, or Demon of Heaven.

Few if any diseases have been designated by
a greater variety of names in both ancient
and modern medical writings than Epilepsy.

It was named *Eclampsia* by Hippocrates,
from the scintillations of light which

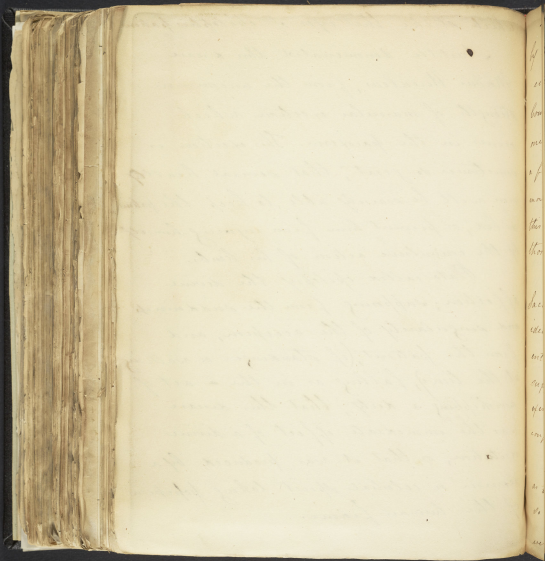


which strike the eyes of epileptic patients.

Aristotle denominated this disease

Morbus Merculeus, from the uncommon strength of muscular exertion which occurs in the paroxysm. This exertion is sometimes so great, that several healthy men will be scarcely able to keep the patient in bed, or prevent him from injuring himself by the convulsive action of his limbs.

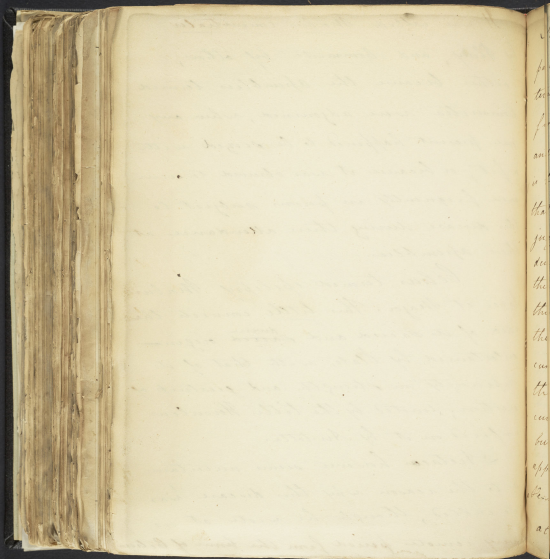
Plato called epilepsy the divine affection; supposing from the suddenness and singularity of the accession, and from the patient, (if standing or walking at the time), falling as in the act of worshipping a deity, that this disease was the immediate effect of a divine visitation, or that it was produced by a demon or celestial spirit taking possession of the human frame.



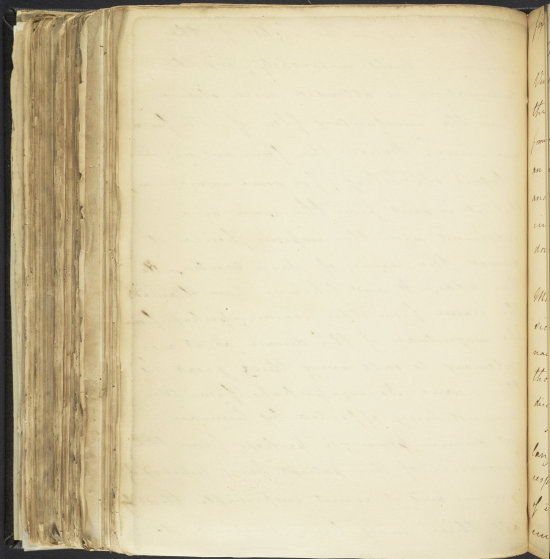
It was called Morbus committalis by Pliny, and Commites by others, either because the assemblies termed Comitia were adjourned, when any one present happened to be seized with a fit, or because it was observed to occur more frequently in persons subject to this disease during their attendance at those assemblies.

Celsus termed epilepsy Morbus Sacrus et Majus. This title connects the idea of its sacred and ~~sacred~~ ^{divine} origin entertained by Plato, with that of its superiority in strength and greatness of operation, denoted by the title Muculosus conferred on it by Aristotle.

Aetacæ however seems uncertain as to the reason why this disease was so called, though he wrote at no very remote period from the time of Celsus.



Stotacas corp — The sight of the
paroxysm is truly melancholy, and the
termination is attended with shame
from the involuntary flow of both faeces
and urine. Beside the form and figure
is beyond all belief; for some imagine,
that it is sent from the moon, as a
judgement upon the impious, hence it
derived the name of *Sacra Morbus*. He
then adds, — It may likewise have obtained
this name from other reasons; — perhaps from
the magnitude of the disease, as it was
customary to call every thing great by
the name *Sacra*; — perhaps from the
cure not being effected by human
but divine power; or perhaps from the
appearance of the patient being possessed of
Demons, and it is not improbable that
all these may have conspired to



fix the appellation

This disease is termed at one time *Uindellus*, and at another *Caducus*, by the excellent Swiss *Paracelsus*. By the former term he probably intends to give an idea of its demoniacal strength, and by the latter an idea of the circumstance of the patient falling down on its accession.

It is called *Analepsia* by *Hieronymus*; *Mal delatune* by the French; and *falling sickness* by the English. The technical names mentioned are only a few of those bestowed at different times on the disease of which I am treating.

It is evident from this view of the language of the ancient physicians respecting epilepsy, that their ideas of its causes and nature were extremely crude and imperfect.

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Sauvages, in considering epilepsy as a disease distinct from accidental convulsions, enumerates fourteen species & many of these, no doubt, were true cases of epilepsy; but they amount only to varieties, and cannot in correct pathology be regarded as distinct diseases.

Dr. Cullen, in his classification of diseases, makes Epilepsy a genus, which he arranges in the Class Mimus, and order spasmi. In his first lines, he says, "this disease may be defined, as consisting in convulsions of the greater part of the muscles of voluntary motion, attended with a loss of sense, and ending in a state of insensibility and seeming sleep."

There is always a state of unconsciousness during the convulsions, but the paroxysm does not, according to the observations

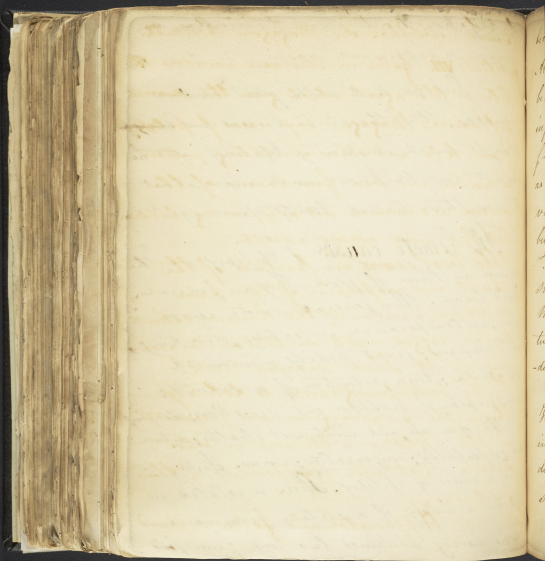
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of profuse hush, always terminate in
coma or apparent sleep.

Profuse hush with great candid
remarks, that "though he has read and ~~thought~~
thought much concerning Epilepsy, yet he
cannot say he knows much more about
it now, than he did thirty years ago."

The remote causes of Epilepsy are the
same as those of fever. They are general
and local. The general remote causes
are, intemperance in eating, drinking,
and venery; great bodily or mental
exercise; tona; retention of excrements;
suppression of eruptions and secretions; sleeping
in the open air, and ⁱⁿ with wet cloaths; impure
air; sympathy; congeniality; worms. Fasting is
also a cause of epilepsy. There is related in
Galen a history of a certain grammarian
who having abstained too long from food



became epileptic. see Morgagni Letter IX.

Article VIII. Galen in this case considers the bile as the agent which gives the diseased influence. Morgagni says, cases of epilepsy from bile, and other irritating matters as worms, and even from diseases of the viscera, are common, not only among children, but likewise among adults.

The local causes are fractures of the skull, and compression of the brain; Small conformation of the brain and skull; tumors; ragged warts on the angles according to B: Short; decayed teeth.

The predisposing cause is debility. Hence the paroxysms occurs most frequently in the night, as is the case in other diseases which arise from debility of the system.

Hippocrates and Galen supposed

Epilepsy to depend on the constitutional
states of repletion and inanition. Either
of these states would be, with them, the
predisposing cause. But Auerhues informs
us, that physicians in his time regarded
this theory rather as a fable, than
as an established truth.

The disease has its seat principally in
the nerves, muscles, and bloodvessels.

When the excitability of these parts
is deeply affected by its causes, the
cure is difficult. Several of the remote
causes of this disease are also exciting
CAUSES; and in addition to those enumerated
I may add as exciting causes— temperature,
climate, season, and the periods of the
moon: for all these appear to influence
the disease, both in regard to its time
of ^{recurrence} _{of}, and to the violence of the paroxysm.

Before the disease has become ~~fully~~^{firmly} established, vehement ~~pass~~ passions of the mind are among the most common of the exciting causes of the paroxysms.

Terra, which has been already mentioned, fear, rage, fury, revenge, love, jealousy, and ambition, are severally observed to induce the fit in persons predisposed to the disease.

^{hence, the} In the first or highest grade of the paroxysms are so violent as to cause an emission of semen masculinum, and sometimes an effusion of bloody sweat. The operations of the mind are totally suspended.

In the second grade the symptoms are less violent; the powers of the body are not intirely prostrated by the force of the paroxysm, and even the mind is ~~but~~ not totally.

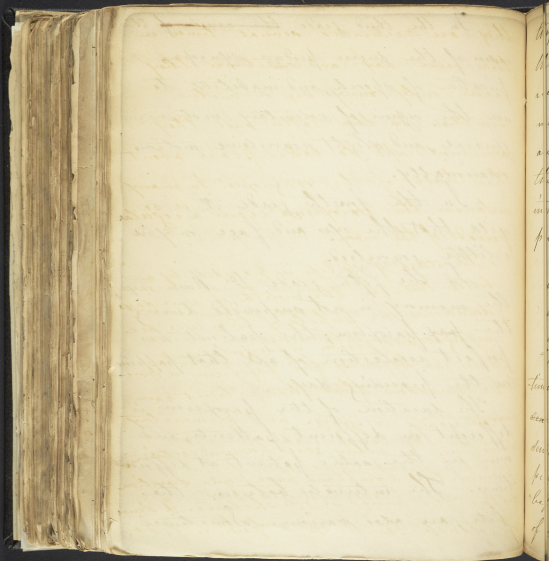
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In the third grade, ~~the cause of~~ the cause of the disease produce syncope, privation of speech, and inability to use the organs of voluntary motion in general, and slight convulsive motions occasionally.

In the fourth grade it is so mild that the eyes and face may be a little convulsed.

In the fifth grade, Dr. Rush says, the memory is not suspended during the ~~par~~ paroxysm; the patient has perfect recollection of all that happened on the preceding day.

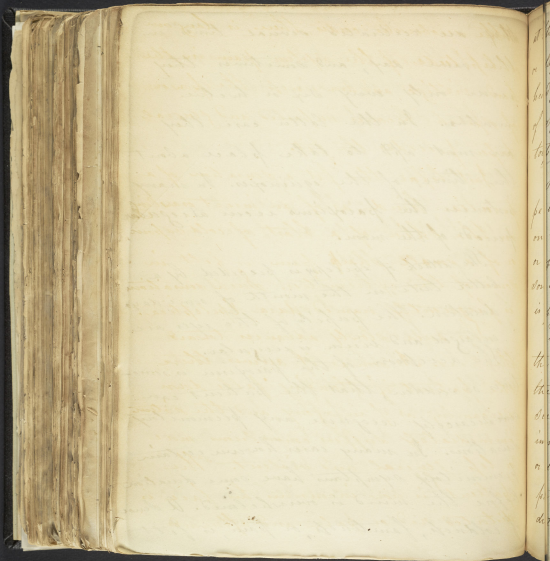
The duration of the paroxysm is different in different patients, and even in the same patient at different times. The intervals between the fits are also various. Sometimes



they are reiterated several times in the same day, and sometimes they occur only every six or twelve months. In the latter case they are most apt to take place about the time of the equinoxes. In many instances the paroxysms occur at regular periods of the moon.

The attack of epilepsy is preceded by a bitter taste in the mouth of some days duration. The pupils of the eyes are enlarged and vision is irregular.

The accession of the paroxysm is sometimes so sudden, that the patient can scarcely recognise any premonitory sensations. In many cases however certain premonitory symptoms have some duration before the mind is overwhelmed. A sense of coldness, faintness, or pain, is felt



at the subnucleus cordis; there is languor
or lappitude of the system, pain in the
head, vertigo, and drowsiness; the power
of speech becomes impaired, and general
torpor precedes the fit.

Just before the fit a sensation of a
peculiar kind, as of an insect crawling
on the skin, of a blast of cold vapour,
or of a small sharp pain, is felt in
some of the extremities. Such sensation
is frequently named Aura Epileptica.

This aura slowly advances toward
the head. As soon as it arrives there
the patient, if standing, falls down,
screaming as if in agony, and the system
immediately suffers convulsions more
or less general and violent. The
patient is now inconvulsus; his face is
distorted, red, or pale; and afterwards

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lived and bloated.

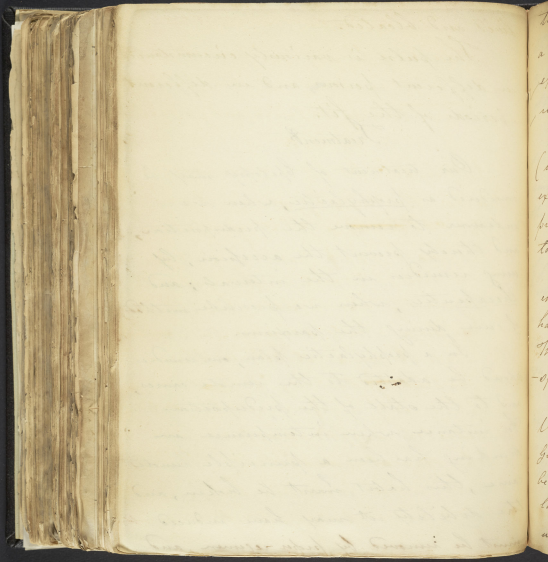
The pulse is variously circumstanced in different persons, and in different periods of the fit.

Treatment.

Our treatment of Epilepsy may be considered as prophylactic, when we endeavour to remove the predisposition, and thereby prevent the accession, by using remedies in the intervals; and therapeutic, when we prescribe methods of cure during the paroxysms.

In a prophylactic plan, our remedies should be adapted to the remote causes, and to the state of the predisposition.

For instance when intemperance in drinking has been a principle remote cause, this habit must be broken, and the debility it may have induced must be removed by proper regimen and



tonic medicines. When worms are a remote cause, they should be expelled, or the system should be rendered insusceptible of their irritation.

Absolute temperance in all things, (in eating, drinking, pleasures, mental exercise, and passions) is perhaps the best preventive measure, but it is difficult to enforce it.

The medicines which have been employed in the intervals as prophylactics, have been more numerous than successful. They have been principally of the anti-spasmodic ~~kind~~ and tonic kinds.

Of those named antispasmodics, Valerian, Opium, Stannarium, the foetid Gum-resins, casta, ^{and stages} and musk, have all been employed; and perhaps the first & last of these have been most successful. Valerian has, I believe, been

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of considerable service in many cases,
though it may not often have effected
a perfect cure. The punnian balsam, and
other ~~similar~~ medicines, have also been useful.

The tonics which have had most
dependance rested in them, are, cuprum
ammoniacum, the nitrate of silver, and
the white oxide of Zinc.

~~One here~~ Opium has been found
of great use in this disease by St. Darwin.
It should be administered in a full dose
a short time before the accession, in ~~which~~
cases in which the paroxysms recur at
regular periods.

Dr. Samuel Cooper had some
experience of the effects of Stannum
in Epilepsy, in the Pennsylvania
Hospital. He employed the leaf in
powder with advantage. He abridges
some communications made to him

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by Dr. Haet, which show that this article may become an important remedy in certain stages and conditions of the disease, when physicians are better acquainted with its properties and its mode of affecting the system.

The Balsam of Peru has been found of great efficacy in convulsive diseases, arising from organic lesions, by Dr. Ruskland of Exeter; and in true Epilepsy by Dr. Rogers of this city.

Tobacco has proved a remedy of singular powers in the cases in which it has been fairly tried. I am disposed to believe that this medicine, if employed in the manner detailed by Dr. Currie, would be found more generally useful than any in the preceding list. It appears however to be most efficacious when administered during actual indisposition.

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Emetics and gentle purges are necessary when the stomach and bowels are inactive. Long continued salivation is recommended. Dr. Rush says it may act in two ways, by depletion, and by the abstinence which attends this measure.

During the paroxysm all ligatures, bandages, and tight dress, must be loosed. The patient should be preserved in an easy, recumbent posture. Tobacco leaves may be applied to the pit of the stomach; or a decoction of a half a dram, or a dram, exhibited as an enema.

Having no original observations to offer of a practical kind, it is useless to dilate concerning the treatment.

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